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Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Lichtenberg Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lenz Hambrecht Doyle Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Hanrieder Droste-Hülshoff
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Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Tersteegen Gilm Grillparzer Georgy
Brentano Claudius Schiller Lafontaine Kralik Iffland Sokrates
Strachwitz Bellamy Schilling Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving
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The Swedish Revolution Under Gustavus Vasa

Paul Barron Watson

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PREFACE.

NO name in history lies deeper in Swedish hearts than the name Gustavus Vasa. Liberator of Sweden from the yoke of Denmark, and founder of one of the foremost dynasties of Europe, his people during more than three centuries have looked back fondly to the figure of their great ruler, and cherished with tender reverence every incident in his romantic history. This enthusiasm for Gustavus Vasa is more than sentiment; it belongs to him as leader in a vast political upheaval. When Gustavus came upon the stage, the Swedish people had long been groaning under a foreign despotism. During more than a century their political existence had been ignored, their rights as freemen trampled in the dust. They had at last been goaded into a spirit of rebellion, and were already struggling to be free. What they most needed was a leader with courage to summon them to arms, and with perseverance [Pg vi] to keep them in the field. Possessing these traits beyond all others, Gustavus called his people forth to war, and finally brought them through the war to victory. This revolution extended over a period of seven years,—from the uprising of the Dalesmen in 1521 to the coronation of Gustavus in 1528. It is a period that should be of interest, not only to the student of history, but also to the lover of romance. In order to render the exact nature of the struggle clear, I have begun the narrative at a time considerably before the revolution, though I have not entered deeply into details till the beginning of the war in 1521. By the middle of the year 1523, when Gustavus was elected king, actual warfare had nearly ceased, and the scenes of the drama change from the battle-field to the legislative chamber. In this period occurred the crowning act of the revolution; namely, the banishment of the Romish Church and clergy.

The history of the Swedish Revolution has never before been written in the English language. Even Gustavus Vasa is but little known outside his native land. Doubtless this is due in large measure to the difficulties which beset a study of the period. It is not a period to which the student of literature can turn with joy. One [Pg vii] who would know Gustavus well must traverse a vast desert of dreary reading, and pore over many volumes of verbose despatches before he can find a drop of moisture to relieve the arid soil. Swe-

den in the early part of the sixteenth century was not fertile in literary men. Gustavus himself, judged by any rational standard, was an abominable writer. His despatches are in number almost endless and in length appalling. Page after page he runs on, seemingly with no other object than to use up time. Often a document covers four folios, which might easily have been compressed into a single sentence. Such was the habit of the age. A simple letter from a man to his wife consisted mainly of a mass of stereotyped expressions of respect. Language was used apparently to conceal vacuity of mind. Toward the close of the monarch's reign there was a marked improvement in literary style, and some few works of that period possess real worth. These have recently been printed, and as a rule have been edited with considerable care. The king's despatches are also being systematically printed by the authorities of the Royal Archives at Stockholm, and the cloud of ignorance which has hitherto hung over the head of Sweden's early monarch is lifting fast. The tenth volume [Pg viii] of the king's despatches, known as *Gustaf I.'s registratur* has now been published, carrying this contemporary transcript of the king's letters down to the summer of 1535. The only documents bearing on the Swedish Revolution and not yet published, are the MSS. known as *Gustaf I.'s rådslagar*, *Gustaf I.'s acta historica*, and *Gustaf I.'s bref med bilagor*,—all to be found in the Royal Archives at Stockholm,—and the MSS. known as the *Palmskiöld samlingar* in the Upsala Library. All these I have carefully examined. I have also browsed during several months among the libraries of Sweden, and have spared no pains to get at everything, written or printed, contemporary or subsequent, that might throw light upon the subject. The most important of these materials are mentioned in the bibliography inserted immediately before the Index to this work. In order to add vividness as well as accuracy to the narrative, I have visited personally nearly all the battle-fields and other spots connected with this history. My descriptions of the leading contemporaries of Gustavus are based on a careful study of the portraits in the Gripsholm gallery, most of which were painted from life.

Finally, a word of thanks is due to the libraries and archives from which I have derived most aid. [Pg ix] Of these the chief are the British Museum, the University Library at Upsala, and above all, the Royal Library and the Royal Archives at Stockholm. To the last two

institutions I owe more than I can express. They are the storehouses of Swedish history, and their doors were thrown open to me with a generosity and freedom beyond all that I could hope. I wish here to thank my many friends, the custodians of these treasures, for the personal encouragement and assistance they have lent me in the prosecution of this work.

August 15, 1889.

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Seal of Bishop Brask. Bears the inscription: S[IGILLVM] IOH[ANN]IS
DEI GRA[CIA] EPI[SCOPI] LINCOPENSIS

"Klipping" issued by Gustavus Vasa in 1521 or 1522. On one side, the
bust of a man in armor. On the other, crowns and arrows, with the
inscription: ERI[KS]SO[N]

Medal struck in commemoration of the deliverance of Sweden in
1522. On one side, a half-length figure of Gustavus Vasa, with the
date 1522 and the inscription: GVSTAF ERICSEN G[VBERNATOR]
R[EGNI] S[VECIAE]. On the other, crowns and arrows, with the in-
scription: PROTEGE NOS IESV

Coin issued in Stockholm in 1522. On one side, the inscription:
GOSTA[F] ERI[KS] SO[N] 1522, and in the centre, G[VBERNATOR].
On the other, a crown, with the inscription: MONET[A]
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Coin issued in Stockholm in 1522. On one side, a full-length figure,
with the inscription: S[ANCTVS] ERICVS REX SWECIEI. On the oth-
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with the inscription: S[ANCTVS] ERICVS REX SVE[CIAE]. On the
other, the inscription: MONETA STOC[K]HO[LMENSIS]

Coin issued in Upsala in 1523. On one side, a bust with arrows and
sheaves of corn, and the inscription: S[ANCTVS] ERICVS REX

SWECIE. On the other, three crowns, with the inscription:
MONE[TA] NOVA VPSAL[ENSIS] 1523

Coin issued in Vesterås in 1523. On one side, a crown, with the inscription: GOST[AF] REX SWECIE. On the other, three crowns, with the inscription: MONE[TA] NOVA WESTAR[OSIENSIS]

Coin issued at the coronation of Gustavus Vasa in 1528. On one side, a full-length figure of the king, with crown, sword, and sceptre, and the inscription: GOSTAVS D[EI] G[RACIA] SVECORVM REX. On the other, the inscription: MONET[A] NOVA STO[C]K[H]OL[MENSIS] 1528

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THE SWEDISH REVOLUTION.

Chapter I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF GUSTAVUS VASA. 1496-1513.

Birth of Gustavus.—His Ancestors.—Anarchy in Sweden.—Its Causes: Former Independence of the People; Growth of Christianity; Growth of the Aristocracy; the Cabinet; Enslavement of Sweden; Revolt of the People against Denmark.—Christiern I.—Sten Sture.—Hans.—Svante Sture.—Sten Sture the Younger.—Childhood of Gustavus.—His Education at Upsala.

THE manor of Lindholm lies in the centre of a smiling district about twenty miles north of the capital of Sweden. Placed on a height between two fairy lakes, it commands a wide and varied prospect over the surrounding country. The summit of this height was crowned, at the close of the fifteenth century, by a celebrated mansion. Time and the ravages of man have long since thrown this mansion to the ground; but its foundation, overgrown with moss and fast crumbling to decay, still marks the site of the ancient structure, and from the midst of the ruins rises a rough-hewn stone bearing the name Gustavus Vasa. On this spot he was born, May 12, 1496. [1] The [Pg 2] estate was then the property of his grandmother, Sigrid Baner, with whom his mother was temporarily residing, and there is no reason to think it continued long the home of the young Gustavus.

The family from which Gustavus sprang had been, during nearly a hundred years, one of the foremost families of Sweden. Its coat-of-arms consisted of a [Pg 3] simple *vase*, or bundle of sticks; and the Vasa estate, at one time the residence of his ancestors, lay only about ten miles to the north of Lindholm. [2] The first Vasa of whom anything is definitely known is Kristiern Nilsson, the great-grandfather of Gustavus. This man became noted in the early part of the fifteenth century as an ardent monarchist, and under Erik held the post of chancellor. After the fall of his master, in 1436, his office was taken from him, but he continued to battle for the cause of royalty until his death. Of the chancellor's three sons, the two

eldest followed zealously in the footsteps of their father. The other, Johan Kristersson, though in early life a staunch supporter of King Christiern, and one of the members of his Cabinet, later married a sister of Sten Sture, and eventually embraced the Swedish cause. Birgitta, the wife of Johan Kristersson, is said to have been descended from the ancient Swedish kings. [3] The youngest son of Johan and Birgitta was Erik Johansson, the father of Gustavus. Of Erik's early history we know little more than that he married Cecilia, daughter of Magnus Karlsson and Sigrid Baner, and settled at Rydboholm, an estate which [Pg 4] he inherited from his father. To this place, beautifully situated on an arm of the Baltic, about ten miles northeast of the capital, Cecilia returned with her little boy from Lindholm; and here Gustavus spent the first years of his childhood.

Sweden at this period was in a state of anarchy. In order to appreciate the exact condition of affairs, it will be necessary to cast a glance at some political developments that had gone before. Sweden was originally a confederation of provinces united solely for purposes of defence. Each province was divided into several counties, which were constituted in the main alike. Every inhabitant—if we except the class of slaves, which was soon abolished—was either a landowner or a tenant. The tenants were freemen who owned no land of their own, and hence rented the land of others. All landowners possessed the same rights, though among them were certain men of high birth, who through their large inheritances were much more influential than the rest. Matters concerning the inhabitants of one county only were regulated by the county assemblies, to which all landowners in the county, and none others, were admitted. These assemblies were called and presided over by the county magistrate, elected by general vote at some previous assembly. All law cases arising in the county were tried before the assembly, judgment being passed, with consent of the assembly, by the county magistrate, who was expected to know and expound the traditional law of his county. Questions concerning the inhabitants of more than one county were regulated by the provincial assemblies, [Pg 5] composed of all landowners in the province, and presided over by the provincial magistrate, elected by all the landowners in his province. The power of the provincial magistrate in the province was similar to that of the county magistrate in the county; and to his

judgment, with consent of the assembly, lay an appeal from every decision of the county magistrates. Above all the provinces was a king, elected originally by the provincial assembly of Upland, though in order to gain the allegiance of the other provinces he was bound to appear before their individual assemblies and be confirmed by them. His duty was expressed in the old formula, "landom råda, rike styre, lag styrke, och frid hålla," which meant nothing more than that he was to protect the provinces from one another and from foreign powers. In order to defray the expense of strengthening the kingdom, he was entitled to certain definite taxes from every landowner, and half as much from every tenant, in the land. These taxes he collected through his courtiers, who in the early days were men of a very inferior class,—mere servants of the king. They lived on the crown estates, which we find in the very earliest times scattered through the land. Besides his right to collect taxes, the king, as general peacemaker, was chief-justice of the realm, and to him lay an appeal from every decision rendered by a provincial magistrate. Such, in brief, was the constitution of Sweden when first known in history.

Christianity, first preached in Sweden about the year 830, brought with it a diminution of the people's rights. When the episcopal dioceses were first marked out, the [Pg 6] people naturally kept in their own hands the right to choose their spiritual rulers, who were designated *lydbiskopar*, or the people's bishops. But in 1164 the Court of Rome succeeded in establishing, under its own authority, an archbishopric at Upsala; and by a papal bull of 1250 the choice of Swedish bishops was taken from the people and confided to the cathedral chapters under the supervision of the pope. As soon as the whole country became converted, the piety of the people induced them to submit to gross impositions at the hands of those whom they were taught to regard as God's representatives on earth. In 1152 the so-called "Peter's Penning" was established, an annual tax of one penning from every individual to the pope. Besides this, it became the law, soon after, that all persons must pay a tenth of their annual income to the Church, and in addition there were special taxes to the various bishops, deans, and pastors. A still more productive source of revenue to the Church was death-bed piety, through which means a vast amount of land passed from kings or

wealthy individuals to the Church. By a law of the year 1200 the clergy were declared no longer subject to be tried for crime in temporal courts; and by the end of the thirteenth century the Church had practically ceased to be liable for crown taxation. It requires but a moment's thought to perceive how heavy a burden all these changes threw on the body of the nation.

Simultaneously with the spread of Christianity still another power began to trample on the liberties of the people. This was the power of the sword. In early times, before civilization had advanced enough to give [Pg 7] everybody continuous employment, most people spent their leisure moments in making war. Hence the Swedish kings, whose duty it was to keep the peace, could accomplish that result only by having a large retinue of armed warriors at their command. The expense which this entailed was great. Meantime the crown estates had continually increased in number through merger of private estates of different kings, through crown succession to estates of foreigners dying without descendants in the realm, and through other sources. Some of the kings, therefore, devised the scheme of enlisting the influential aristocracy in their service by granting them fiefs in the crown estates, with right to all the crown incomes from the fief. This plan was eagerly caught at by the aristocrats, and before long nearly all the influential people in the realm were in the service of the king. Thus the position of royal courtier, which had formerly been a mark of servitude, was now counted an honor, the courtiers being now commonly known as magnates. About the year 1200 castles were first erected on some of the crown estates, and the magnates who held these castles as fiefs were not slow to take advantage of their power. Being already the most influential men in their provinces, and generally the county or provincial magistrates, they gradually usurped the right to govern the surrounding territory, not as magistrates of the people, but as grantees of the crown estates. Since these fiefs were not hereditary, the rights usurped by the holders of them passed, on the death of the grantees, to the crown, and in 1276 we find a king granting not only one of his royal castles, [Pg 8] but also right of administration over the surrounding land. Thus, by continual enlargement of the royal fiefs, the authority of the provincial assemblies, and even of the county assemblies, was practically destroyed. Still, these assem-

blies continued to exist, and in them the poor landowners claimed the same rights as the more influential magnates. The magnates, as such, possessed no privileges, and were only powerful because of their wealth, which enabled them to become courtiers or warriors of the king. In 1280, however, a law was passed exempting all mounted courtiers from crown taxation. This law was the foundation of the nobility of Sweden. It divided the old landowners, formerly all equal, into two distinct classes,—the knights, who were the mounted warriors of the king; and the poorer landowners, on whom, together with the class of tenants, was cast the whole burden of taxation. With the progress of time, exemption from crown taxation was extended to the sons of knights unless, on reaching manhood, they failed to serve the king with horse. The knights were thus a privileged and hereditary class. Those of the old magnates who did not become knights were known as armigers, or armor-clad foot-soldiers. The armigers also became an hereditary class, and before long they too were exempted from crown taxation. In many cases the armigers were raised to the rank of knights. Thus the wealthy landowners increased in power, while the poor, who constituted the great body of the nation, grew ever poorer. Many, to escape the taxes shifted to their shoulders from the shoulders of the magnates, sank into the class of tenants, with whom, indeed, they now had [Pg 9] much in common. The sword had raised the strong into a privileged aristocracy, and degraded the weak into a down-trodden peasantry.

The aristocracy and the Church,—these were the thorns that sprang up to check the nation's growth. Each had had the same source,—a power granted by the people. But no sooner were they independent of their benefactors, than they made common cause in oppressing the peasantry who had given them birth. They found their point of union in the Cabinet. This was originally a body of men whom the king summoned whenever he needed counsel or support. Naturally he sought support among the chief men of his realm. As the power of the Church and aristocracy increased, the king was practically forced to summon the chief persons in these classes to his Cabinet, and furthermore, in most cases, to follow their advice; so that by the close of the thirteenth century the Cabinet had become a regular institution, whose members, known as

Cabinet lords, governed rather than advised the king. In the early part of the fourteenth century this institution succeeded in passing a law that each new king must summon his Cabinet immediately after his election. The same law provided that no foreigner could be a member of the Cabinet; that the archbishop should be *ex officio* a member; that twelve laymen should be summoned, but no more; and that, in addition, the king might summon as many of the bishops and clergy as he wished. As a matter of fact this law was never followed. The Cabinet lords practically formed themselves into a close corporation, appointing their own [Pg 10] successors or compelling the king to appoint whom they desired. Generally the members were succeeded by their sons, and in very many instances we find fathers and sons sitting in the Cabinet together. A person once a Cabinet lord was such for life. The law providing that the archbishop should have a seat in the Cabinet was strictly followed, and in practice the bishops were also always members. The other clergy seem never to have been summoned except in certain instances to aid their bishops or represent them when they could not come. The provincial magistrates were generally members, though not always. As to the number of temporal lords, it was almost invariably more than twelve, sometimes double as many. From the very first, this self-appointed oligarchy saw that in unity was strength; and while the different members of the royal family were squabbling among themselves, the Cabinet seized the opportunity to increase its power. Though not entitled to a definite salary, it was regularly understood that Cabinet lords were to be paid by grants of the chief fiefs; and when these fiefs were extended so as to embrace the whole, or nearly the whole, of a province, the grant of such a fief ordinarily carried with it the office of provincial magistrate. Thus the Cabinet became the centre of administration for the kingdom. From this it gradually usurped the right to legislate for the whole realm, to lay new taxes on the people, and to negotiate treaties with foreign powers. Lastly, it robbed the people of their ancient right to nominate and confirm their kings. These prerogatives, however, were not exercised without strong opposition. Throughout [Pg 11] the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the peasantry battled with vigor against the arrogant assumptions of the Cabinet, never relinquishing their claim to be governed as of yore. This struggle against the encroachments of the oligarchy at last resulted in the revolution